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NEWS

Winchester's Sen. Jason Lewis leads successful passage of Educator Diversity Act

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Sen. Jason Lewis led the successful effort to pass the Educator Diversity Act, legislation that was signed into law by Gov. Maura Healey on Nov. 20, 2024. FILE PHOTO

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

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State Sen. Jason Lewis led the successful effort in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass the Educator Diversity Act, legislation that was signed into law by Gov. Maura Healey on Nov. 20, 2024.

The Educator Diversity Act seeks to strengthen the K-12 educator workforce by hiring and retaining more diverse educators and improving student outcomes.
Massachusetts is a national leader in public education, but the state's student population is diversifying at a much faster rate than its teachers and school administrators.

While students of color make up over 45% of public school enrollment, educators of colors only account for about 10% of the teacher workforce.

"There is strong evidence of the academic and social-emotional benefits for students from having diverse teachers, especially for students of color," said Lewis, Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Education. "I'm proud to have filed and championed this legislation and grateful to all the students, teachers, parents, and advocates who helped get the Educator Diversity Act across the finish line."

"This is a monumental victory for Massachusetts students, families, and educators. Research consistently shows that all students benefit from a diverse educator workforce, and this law ensures we are building a system where every child can see themselves represented in the classroom," said Amanda Fernandez, CEO and founder of Latinos for Education. "This bill is the first of its kind in the nation and will serve as a model for other states eager to pass similar legislation.

"We want to thank Speaker [Ronald] Mariano and Senate President [Karen] Spilka for their leadership on this critical issue and our bill sponsors, House Assistant Majority Leader Alice Peisch, and Sen. Jason Le their resilient leadership," he continued. "Additionally, Latinos for

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Education and the Educator Diversity Act Coalition are grateful to the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus for making this their only education priority for the session and to the over 90 House and Senate co-sponsors of the bill."

Have a story idea? Email editor@WinchesterNews.org.

Key provisions of the Educator Diversity Act include:

• Setting statewide educator diversity goals and publishing an annual report to ensure progress in hiring and retaining diverse educators.

• Requiring the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to work with school districts on plans to increase their educator diversity.

• Requiring each school district to appoint a diversity officer or team to advise the superintendent and other district leaders on efforts to recruit and retain diverse educators.

• Elevating the voices of diverse educators, parents, and students by requiring all school districts to establish a process for advising the Superintendent and School Committee on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

• Requiring diversity and implicit bias training at least every five years for all school and district employees and School Committee members.

• Requiring DESE to establish a teacher apprenticeship pilot program.

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• Requiring teacher preparation programs to examine and address barriers to equity in enrollment and completion of their programs.

• Incentivizing diverse and highly effective educators to work in high-needs school districts.

• Establishing a public information campaign to spread awareness of state scholarships and loan forgiveness programs for prospective educators.

• Enabling DESE to create new pathways for teacher licensure and certification.

The Educator Diversity Act was included as part of a broader economic development package that received final passage in the House of Representatives and the Senate and was then signed into law by Healey on Nov. 20, 2024.

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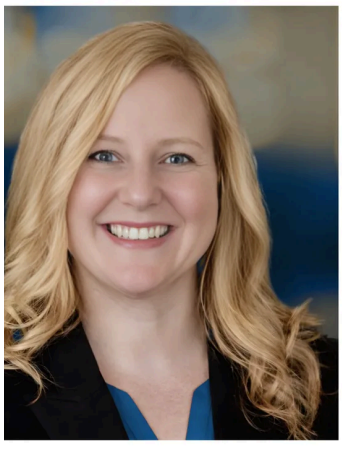

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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March 4, 2026

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The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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